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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the literature and research on literature-based reading programs (as an alternative to basal reading instruction) that have proven successful and identifies key elements of such programs. The first part of the paper contains an introduction, a statement of the problem, the significance of the problem, a description of the procedures to be used, and definitions of terms. The second part of the paper presents a review of the literature and research related to literature-based reading programs. The last part of the paper includes a summary, conclusion, and recommendations. The paper concludes that the success of literature-based reading programs is well-documented and that such programs serve as a viable approach to teaching reading at the elementary level. Recommendations offered in the paper include: (1) literature-based reading instruction should be introduced at the earliest grades; (2) librarians, teachers, and parents need to cooperate in carrying out effective literature-based programs in their schools; (3) longitudinal studies should be conducted to determine the long range effect of literature-based reading programs on academic achievement; and (4) teachers should provide an environment in which students view themselves as good readers who can enjoy and profit from various kinds of materials. Contains 58 references. (RS)

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Literature-Based Reading Programs:

Elements for Success

by

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September 27, 1994

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Chapter I

Introduction

The debate over the best approach to teaching reading has been going on for decades. Questions such as, how should reading be taught and with what sort of materials, basal readers or literature? Do real books come later, ter a child has mastered decoding skills? Might the child start with real books from the library or book club and learn skills as needed in so-called natural context? What are the best ways to lead a child to literacy? These questions have been at the core of this continuous debate (Tunnell and Jacobs, 1989).

Advocates of basal reading instruction cite the logic and successful tradition of this method. Basal reading programs have dominated the classroom for decades. In fact, 95-99 percent of American teachers relied on the basal reader in 1958 and 80-90 percent did in 1980 (Koeller, 1981).

The Whole Language Movement gained momentum in the 1980's and gave renewed attention to individualized reading. It redefined and refined the process which primarily uses real books to teach and foster literacy.

The Whole Language Movement, which includes

> the heavy use of literature in reading programs, is a grassroots effort led by the already convinced: teachers and librarians who encourage children's learning to love to read through reading genuine literature. The movement is grounded in three basic beliefs: (a) that children learn to read by actually reading, (b) that reading is part of language, and (c) that learning in any one area of language helps learning in other areas (Cullinan, 1989, p. 2).

Literature-based reading programs evolved as a result of this Whole Language Movement. The key to teaching reading, whole language advocates argue, is emphasizing what words mean rather than how they are put together. Reading is a process of unlocking meaning, not one of decoding symbols into sounds, according to Smith (1992), a founder of the movement. Phonics teaching amounts to the memorization of nonsense, breaking naturally spoken language into abstract bits confusing to new readers. The result of phonics instruction, argued Frey (1990), is that often students are able to sound out words but are

unable to understand them.

Toch (1992) noted that students exposed to a whole-language approach read with greater comprehension than their phonics-studying peers. For many teachers, the proof that the whole language approach works is that their students learn to read and write earlier.

Nicholson (1991) reported that Goodman found that children made 60-80 percent fewer errors when reading words in context, a strategy emphasized in the whole-language approach. The same result was not achieved when words were phonetically pronounced in isolation. It was further noted that research does not support any particular scope and sequence of subskills which, if practiced in isolation, will result in competent reading.

Improvement in reading occurs only when children read real texts. This view is not reflected in basal reader programs, which generally include elaborate sequences of skills to be taught and practiced in isolation, observed Tunnell and Jacobs (1989).

Wood and Adenyl (1992) noted that teachers who recognize the weaknesses in commercial programs and are aware of the value of exposure to good literary fare,

are moving away from total dependence on basal readers to more literature-based or whole-language instruction. These new understandings about literacy acquisition have resulted in widespread criticism of basal readers. The role of prediction in reading, particularly at the beginning stages, has received much attention in the past decade. It has been well established that beginning readers are most successful when materials contain easily discernible patterns of language and content.

Ohanian (1991) noted that stories from trade book encountered by beginning readers conform more closely to their implicit knowledge of story grammar. Many basal readers contain stories that are contrived and oversimplified; therefore, these are neither predictable nor well-constructed.

Vail (1991) stated:

> For students of all ages the up side of whole language is its incorporation of rich vocabulary, exciting narrative, and lovely literary conclusions. Many of today's children, rich and poor, are linguistically under-nourished and desperately need the sounds of

good language. Reading begins with the ears; reading becomes listening with the eyes (p.23).

According to Roberts (1990), the whole language approach stresses comprehension, quickens children's interest in literature, and gets them reading real books and writing earlier than a structured method would. Classrooms in which whole language teaching is emphasized are a delight to visit. Words, stories, and pictures abound. Children may be reading and discussing books or they may be busy writing and illustrating their own books.

In 1981, Shirley Koeller wrote an article for The Reading Teacher titled "25 Years Advocating Children's Literature in the Reading Program." Since that time, we have witnessed nothing less than an explosion of research and theory that supports the use of children's literature in reading instruction (Trachtenburg, 1990).

Cullinan (1987) concluded that essential reading skills can be taught through a literature-based curriculum in a subtle, efficient manner within the context of the material. In addition, well written books provide strong language models upon which children can base their own writing.

Huck (1982) illustrated the potential of quality literature as the base of the reading curriculum:

> Literature records the depths and heights of the human experience. It develops compassion by educating the heart as well as the mind. It helps children entertain new ideas, and develop insights they never had before. It can stretch the imagination, creating new experiences, and enriching old ones. Literature can develop a sense of what is true and just and beautiful (p. 317).

Hiebert and Colt (1989) insisted that to prepare proficient readers, classroom reading programs must provide children with many varied opportunities to read high-quality literature. Schools have responded to this message in several ways. In some schools, tradebooks have become the entire reading program. In other schools, sustained silent reading periods have been reinstituted after falling into disuse during the heavy domination of skills-oriented programs of the 1970's. Furthermore, the amount and quality of literature have increased in textbook programs as a result of mandates by textbook adoption committees to include more high-

quality literature.

Diakiw (1990) contended that children's literature is a powerful medium for understanding the world. Young children find it easier to assimilate new information when this information is presented within the structure of a story. Additionally, Fuhler (1990) found that revised textbook series reflected a concerted effort to include recognized children's authors, a variety of literary genre, excerpts, and complete stories from award winning books to entice children to read. Similarly, Solan (1980) noted that a literature program inspires book enthusiasm, and when it favors aesthetic, cognitive, and affective benefits to readers, it can launch reading hobbies.

Brady and Sills (1993) claimed that reading aloud, a critical factor in motivating readers, is an important activity for building experimental knowledge required for future reading success. Children benefit from being read to in early years. Home setting research relates storybook reading to the following: (a) vocabulary comprehension, (b) active use of language, (c) decoding skills, and (d) subsequent success in school reading.

Berman (1989) contended that a decade of criticism has emphasized the need for a more intellectually stimulating and rigorous curriculum in schools. In teaching reading, educators are beginning to realize the importance of primary sources, particularly literature. The whole language movement, the emphasis on critical thinking, and the proliferation of literature programs all illustrate the need for using trade books, in addition to or instead of textbooks, in helping children learn to read.

The California English-Language Arts Framework (1987) (cited in Trachtenburg, 1990) called for a literature driven curriculum in an attempt to communicate culture through literature and cultivate lifelong readers. Smith (1989) noted if educators wish to stimulate the imagination, provide strong language models, expose students to lucid discourse, and expand their cultural awareness, quality, memorable literature is needed in the reading program.

Educators who use literature-based reading instruction to challenge the basal tradition boast stunning levels of success with all types of students and particularly with uninterested readers and at-risk

readers. Research by Cullinan (1989) revealed that there are statewide literature/literacy initiatives in seven states and in 16 others, programs in school curriculums that hinge upon the use of literature.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study is concerned with the evaluation of literature-based reading programs as an alternative to basal reading instruction. It is the purpose of this study to review the literature and research on literature-based reading programs that have proven successful and to identify the key elements of a successful literature-based reading program.

Significance of the Problem

For years reading has remained the area of the curriculum receiving the most attention. It is the core of the elementary curriculum, and it is the most difficult task facing the school child. It has been suggested that if reading were not belabored in school, it would more pleasurable. It has even been hypothesized that pupils would read more if they were required to read less (Koeller 1981).

Koeller (1981) suggested that reading teachers may be like the Australian aborigine who invented the new boomerang, but was then kept busy trying to throw the old one away. Many reading practices shown to be limited in the 1950's are still in practice today. Surveys by Gates and Sheldon (1958) (cited in Koeller,

1981) revealed that 95-99 percent of American elementary teachers relied on the textbook as the major source for instruction. Pieronek (1980) noted that basal readers are used in one form or another by 80-90 percent of teachers as the vehicle for teaching reading skills; moreover, the round robin strategy, in which every child is seated in the group with the same book open to the same page, is still alive as well (True, 1979).

Koeller (1981) also contended that even though educators know diagnosis is best done on an individual basis, they lack the courage to right this wrong of almost total dependence upon mass methods of teaching reading. The latter results in leveling and homogenizing children, as well as dampening the enjoyment of reading.

Koeller (1981) recommended that teachers should: (a) highlight wide, interesting experiences, (b) provide related reading, and (c) combine instruction in reading skills with free election of children's literature. Unfortunately, children are still taught by the single text approach (Pieronek, 1980).

The use of children's literature in the elementary

reading program has been a recurring theme in professional literature. Evidence from a growing body of research, such as that conducted by Tunnell and Jacobs (1989), and from the field where teachers interact daily with students supports the fact that children learn to read by reading (Cullinan, 1987).

The International Reading Association (1988) (cited in Cullinan, 1989) recommended using children's literature in the reading program; however, there has been a lag in the implementation of such programs. This along with the documented failures of other reading approaches constitutes the need for extensive research on literature-based reading programs as an alternative approach to teaching reading.

Procedure to be Used

This study involved a review of the literature and research on literature-based reading programs that have proven successful. An ERIC search was completed and the research and literature was thoroughly analyzed. The elements of successful literature-based reading programs were identified and are discussed. Recommendations for further study are presented.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were defined for clarity in reading this study:

Alternative - refers to one of two or more techniques from which to choose.

Basal Reader - refers to a set of books issued by a publisher as text for systematic instruction in reading.

Children's literature - refers to published reading material of a superior quality written for children by expert writers.

Decode - refers to the process of translating printed or written symbols into the spoken word.

Literature-Based Reading - refers to instructional practices and student activities using novels, informational books, short stories, plays, and poems.

Natural readers - refers to children who learn to read without any formal reading instruction.

Natural text - refers to stories or books written in natural, uncontrolled language.

Neurological impress method - refers to reading which occurs when the teacher and a small group of children read together with the teacher reading slightly louder and just ahead of the children.

Phonics - refers to the use of speech sounds, and letters that represent speech sound, in the teaching of reading as a means of helping pupil acheive independence in the recognition of words.

Sustained silent reading - refers to time provided for students and teachers to read materials of their choosing without interruption.

Trade Book - refers to a book published for the purpose of giving the reader pleasure and for feeding his interest in reading for pleasure.

Vocabulary - refers to the words and idioms considered essential for minimal use of language.

Whole Language - refers to a literature-based reading program, an integrated method of teaching.

Organization of the Study

This study includes three chapters. Chapter I contains an introduction to the study, a statement of the problem, the significance of the problem, procedure to be used in the study, definition of terms, and organization of the study. Chapter II contains a review of the literature and research related to literature-based reading programs. Chapter III includes the summary, conclusion of the study and recommendations.

References follow Chapter III.

Chapter II

Review of Related Literature

The following studies, involving literature-based reading programs, have shown high levels of achievement for students of different socio-economic and academic levels. A number of controlled studies, such as those conducted by Cohen (1968) and Eldredge and Butterfield (1986), have directly compared literature-based reading with basal mastery learning instruction while others have simply looked at growth within Whole Language classrooms employing literature-based reading programs.

Cohen (1968) used a control group of 130 students in second grade who were taught with basal readers and compared them to 155 children in an experimental group using a literature component along with regular instruction. The schools, in New York City, were selected because of academic retardation presumably due to low socio-economic backgrounds of the students.

The experimental treatment consisted mainly of reading aloud to children from 50 carefully selected children's trade picture books, books without controlled vocabulary or contrived sentences. This was followed with meaning related activities. The children

were encouraged to read the books anytime.

The experimental group showed significant increases over the control group on the Metropolitan Achievement Test and on a Free Association Vocabulary Test administered near the end of the project. Cullinan, Jaggar, and Strickland's (1974) findings were similar.

Eldredge & Butterfield (1986) conducted a study that involved 1,149 children in second grade in 50 Utah classrooms. They compared a traditional basal approach to five other experimental methods, including two which use variations of a literature-based program.

Employing a variety of evaluative techniques (an instrument for evaluative phonics skills developed and validated by Eldredge, the Gates-MacGinitie Reading, and a pictorial self-concept scale), the researchers found significant differences among the instructional methods favored the literature approach teamed with a series of decoding lessons. They concluded that the use of children's literature to teach children to read had a positive effect upon students' achievement and attitudes toward reading. This method of instruction produced gains in achievement much greater than the

traditional method used.

Under the auspices of the New Zealand Department of Education, a literature-based reading program called the Shared Book Experience was examined closely in the experimental study by Holdaway (1982). No graded or structured materials were used in the experimental treatment. Word solving skills were taught in context during real reading. The experimental group had superior scores over the control group in a variety of measures. So impressed was New Zealand's Department of Education that it embarked on a countrywide program of inservice, and subsequently developmental programs such as Shared Book Experience have taken over on a national scale (Tunnell & Jacobs, 1989).

Boehnlein (1987) reported that the Ohio Reading Recovery program personnel were so impressed with New Zealand's program that they developed an American version. The program was used with beginning readers who had a history which indicated the possibility of reading difficulty. Like the New Zealand study, the Ohio Study indicated that after an average of 15 to 16 weeks, of 30 to 40 hours of instruction, 90 percent of the students whose pretest score were in the lowest 20

percent of their class caught up to the average of their class or above and never need remediation again.

One of the more recent experiments dealing with literature-based reading and children at high risk for failure was conducted by Larrick (1987). The Open Sesame program was initiated with 225 kindergarten students, providing them with an opportunity to read in an unpressured, pleasurable environment using neither basal nor workbooks. Immersion in children's literature and language experience approaches to reading and writing were the major instructional thrusts, and skills were taught primarily in meaningful context as children asked for help in writing.

As the year concluded, all 225 students could read their dictated stories and many of the picture books on a second grade level. School officials were so impressed that they made written commitment to extend the program gradually through sixth grade.

White, Vaughn, and Rorie (1986) reported that first grade children from a small, economically depressed rural community responded well to reading and writing programs not using a basal. Print permeated their day books became theirs, in a natural and real

way. The research findings reported that 20 of the 25 children scored a grade equivalent of 2.0 or better on the spring standardized tests. The other five children had scores of 1.6, 1.7 or 1.9, and the lowest percentile ranking was 54th.

Chomsky (1978) addressed the plight of young stalled readers, who for better than a year had made no progress in reading. The subjects were five children in third grade who had average IQs and no apparent language or speech problems but who had always been remedial reading students, hated reading, and had made no progress in reading since first grade. These students were from a middle class suburban community in Boston. Abandoning the intensive decoding program, the researcher asked the children to listen to tape recorded stories from real books, returning to the book often until the story was memorized.

The neurological impress method using natural, enjoyable text proved to be the key to eventual success. Standardized achievement test scores on the Metropolitan Achievement Test after a year treatment, showed that these "no-progress" students were achieving. Average increases in overall reading scores

was 7.5 months. In word knowledge the gain was 6.25 months, a significant improvement for children whose former test scores showed no progress.

Fader (1976) claimed that the true test of the literature-based program was to use it with so called hard to reach subjects. Students at the W. J. Maxey Boy's Training School in Lake Whitmore, Michigan formed the experimental group. Hundreds of paperbacks were provided for W. J. Maxey, along with the time to read them and no obligation to write the usual book reports or summaries. Another midwestern boy's training school was used as a control group.

Though there were no significant differences in the control and experimental groups at the onset, by the end of the school year, the boys at W. J. Maxey showed significant gains over the control group on measures of self-esteem, literacy attitudes, anxiety, verbal proficiency and reading comprehension. In some instances, the control group's scores actually decreased from the year before while the experimental group's surged ahead, even doubling the control groups scores.

Stalled readers also showed marked improvement

in a classroom study with 5th graders. With the entire class, Tunnell (1986) employed a literature-based reading/writing program adapted from the program suggested by Eldredge and Butterfield (1986). Eight of the 28 students in the classroom were reading disabled, receiving federally funded Chapter I or resource instruction in a pull-out program.

After seven months of treatment, the Achievement Series Forms I and II were administered, and the average gain in the overall reading score was a grade equivalent to 1.1. The eight reading disable children, who were virtually stalled in their reading progress, posted an average gain of 1.3 with a comprehension gain of 2.0. Even more noteworthy was the swing in reading attitudes in all children. Negative attitudes toward books and reading virtually disappeared as self concept in relation to literacy rose.

Milobar (1991) examined the effectiveness of a literature-based reading strategy used in a chapter I setting, using a series of books with a familiar character. The subjects were 36 third grade students in a chapter I reading program at five different schools representing a variety of socio-economic

backgrounds. They were divided into control and experimental groups both using the assisted reading strategy consisting of neurological impress, reading aloud, retelling stories, vocabulary development and creative writing. Subjects in the experimental group used the "Curious George" series of books. Pre and posttests consisted of the Gates MacGinitie Form C Reading Comprehension tests, the Slosson Word Recognition Test, and the Botel Word Opposites Test. Results indicated that all students made considerable gains, but that students in the experimental group did not do significantly better than those in the control group. The findings indicated that using a connected series of books enhanced interest and enthusiasm in and about reading.

Oppelt (1991) developed and implemented an integrated reading program to raise reading vocabulary and comprehension scores as well as reading attitudes in a fourth-grade classroom. A classroom of 23 students was used to implement the program. A standard diagnostic test was used to record pre and posttest scores in vocabulary and comprehension, and a reading attitude survey test was used to analyze students

attitudes about recreational and instructional reading. The program consisted of a reading and writing workshop daily with emphasis on learning skills through experiences with whole text. Built-in time for reading aloud, reading silently, self-selection of reading materials and stressed process writing was provided. Results showed a 14 percent increase in vocabulary and a 20 percent increase in comprehension skills. The most noticeable improvement was in the students' attitudes toward reading.

Tunnell and Jacobs (1989) stated that it is important to note that gains in reading skills using a literature-based approach are not limited to students at risk. In studies by Eldredge (1986), Holdaway (1982), and Tunnell (1986) (cited in Tunnell and Jacobs 1989), the average and above average reader made progress equal to and most often better than students in traditional programs, as measured by the typical achievement test.

Some of the strongest evidence for the broad use of a Whole Language program involving literature comes from Reutzel (1988), who taught 63 children in first grade at Sage Creek Elementary School. With a classroom

library of 2,000 books, Reutzel taught the elements of skills and reading within the meaningful context of story books.

No basal was used, nor was the state program of worksheets and drill activities, called the Utah Benchmark Skills used. The goal prescribed by the state is to have the students pass the Utah Benchmark Skills Test at an 80 percent level in May. Reutzel's students scored 93 percent in January, 13 points higher than district expectations and four months earlier than the normal testing time.

When the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT) was given in March group percentiles across all reading categories, word study skills, comprehension, and total reading were uniformly in the 99th percentile for the 63 children. Individual scores were all above grade level except for four children who scored 1.6 grade equivalent. The lowest score was 1.2, and that from a boy who knew only a few letters of the alphabet when entering first grade. Even a girl whose IQ tested at 68 came out at grade level. There was not one nonreading first grader in the school (Reutzel & Fawson, 1988).

Rasinski and De Ford (1985) indicated why literature-based reading approaches may have a profound positive effect on learners. They compared three first grade classrooms, each with competent teachers using different approaches to reading: content centered mastery learning, traditional basal, and child centered literature-based approaches. The researchers looked less at achievement than at student conceptions about reading assessed through interviews.

The responses to the basic question "What is reading?" or "What happens when you read?" were rated by a team of raters in relation to whether they were meaning related (high score of 7) or letter-sound related (low score of 1). Mean scores show that the children from the literature-based program conceived reading to be more of a meaning related activity than did the other children. The mean scores were (a) mastery group: 3.45, (b) basal group: 4.32, and (c) literature group: 4.91 (Rasinski and De Ford, 1985).

Rasinski and De Ford (1985) concluded that good readers in all three groups tended to define reading as being concerned with meaning while poor readers saw it as a process of converting symbol to sound. Natural

texts support reading as a meaning related activity.

Tunnell and Jacobs (1989) contended that the idea that children in classroom situations can be taught to read from "real" books is not a new one. Thompson (1971) examined 40 studies which compared the basal approach to reading instruction with the individualized approach. Twenty-four of the studies favored individualized reading, while only one chose the basal as superior.

Thompson (1971) concluded that individualized reading programs can facilitate reading achievement to the extent that basal programs cannot. However, more often than not they have facilitated higher reader achievement than basal reading programs in controlled studies.

Brosnahan (1988) reported the results of a literature-based reading program designed by two teachers of fifth and sixth-grade students. The students were assigned books that were not by popular authors which the students might choose on their own. The novels were either fiction, fantasy, or historical fiction.

The teachers concluded that their students

retained vocabulary and reading skills better when they were taught using novels rather than when they were taught using basals (Brosnahan, 1988).

The use of novels in reading programs has also been supported in research by Markle (1987), who stated that students need to become familiar with the classics. Students should be exposed to the complete work and not just the watered down versions which are often found in basal readers. It was suggested that librarians work with the teachers to widen the range of learning materials available to satisfy the different ability ranges and interest of the children.

Reutzel and Cooter (1990) reported the findings of a study comparing two literature-based reading classrooms and two basal reading classrooms on a standardized reading achievement measure at the conclusion of first grade. The results indicated a significant difference between literature-based and basal reader approaches. The size of the effects favoring literature-base over basal reader approaches was 0.6 standard deviation from the basal group mean performance. Results of this study supported the belief that literature-based strategies and routines

used in first grade classrooms will yield scores on traditional reading standardized achievement test that are comparable or superior to those resulting from the use of basal reader programs.

Heald-Taylor (1989) cited two studies that compared the effectiveness of literature-base reading programs with other traditional reading programs. In the first study, Calkins (1982) reported a 27-point gain in scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills over a seven year period involving a single school where teachers used literature-based strategies for teaching reading. In the second study, Phinney (1986) (cited in Heald-Taylor 1989) reported significant gains on the Canadian Test of Basic Skills for children in one literature-based reading class over a three year period.

Basic Elements of a Literature-Based Program

Though each of the studies discussed in this paper employed its own brand of literature-based reading instruction, several basic elements could be found in the different approaches. Elements of instruction varied depending upon the age of the students, but in some way the following commonalities were overtly

employed or subtly implied in all of the literature-based reading programs.

* Premises about "natural readers". Advocates of whole language tend to believe reading skills can be acquired in much the same manner as learning to speak (Tunnell & Jacobs, (1989)). Durkin (1961), for example, identified 49 from a pool of 5,103 students in first grade who had received no formal reading instruction but entered school reading at a grade equivalent of 1.5 to 4.6. These 49 "natural readers" had vastly different racial and socioeconomic backgrounds and IQ levels, but there were common factors in the reading models they had at home. Their families had a high regard for reading, children were read to regularly from age two on, and parents answered frequent questions about words and reading. Durkin (1961) concluded that natural readers acquire abilities through experiences with whole language.

Both Clark (1976) and Thorndike (1973) (cited in Tunnell and Jacobs, 1989) supported Durkin's (1961) conclusions. Clark's study of young readers in Scotland yielded two basic common factors in natural readers. All were read to from an early age and all

had access to books at home and through libraries.

Thorndike (1973), studying reading comprehension in 15 countries, discovered two conditions that prevailed in strong readers. All had been read to from an early age and had come from homes that respected education. Learning to read naturally begins when parents read to young children and let them handle books, and that process is continued with the teacher reading aloud and including books naturally in the classroom.

* Use of natural text. In every study examined in this paper researchers, such as Cohen (1968) and Eldredge and Butterfield (1986), were emphatic about using literature written in natural, uncontrolled language. Goodman (1988) supported this move away from basal reading materials, especially after evaluating the ways in which such programs select, write, or alter the stories they include. Basals have tended to isolate sounds, letters, and words from the language systems, and they give little attention to the systems and how they relate in natural texts. Basal materials often contain distorted abstractions, loss of contextual meanings, and loss of grammatical function

due to letter-sound relations taught in isolation of words used out of context (Tunnell and Jacobs, 1989).

Goodman (1988) found that the process of controlling vocabulary and syntax also causes a loss style and made language less natural and less predictable. A closer look at two leading basal series lead Goodman to conclude that only about 20 percent of the texts reproduced were authentic renderings.

* Neurological impress method. In the studies discussed in this paper that involved beginning readers a variation of the neurological impress method was generally employed. In Chomsky's (1978) study, children "read" in the trade book while following the recorded version on audio cassette. Eldredge and Butterfield (1986) used reading pairs (dyads) or groups of three (triads) in which poor readers were teamed with average readers. They sat together and read aloud from the same book while the faster reader touched words as they were read and the slower reader began to read silently, using the better reader as a word resource.

Even the use of Big Books, as suggested by Holdaway (1982) and White (1986), allows for a form of neurological impress. Big Books usually are trade

picture books which have been reproduced in a format large enough to be seen from 20 feet away. With Big Books teachers can have their students follow their fluent reading.

* Reading aloud. Another characteristic of literature-based reading programs is that teachers regularly spend time reading aloud to their students. Daily reading aloud from enjoyable trade books has been the key that unlocked literacy growth for many disabled readers.

Michener (1988) contended that reading aloud to students is an integral part of literature-based reading programs. No discussion of quality reading approaches should neglect this crucial ingredient (and it adapts readily to any reading program). Cullinan (1989), Ransinski and De Ford (1985) and other researchers discussed in this paper have learned that daily reading, even for a mere ten minutes, is a special time spent sharing a good book together. The word-by-word reader meets the fluent readers on common ground when a teacher reads to a class. Not only is the love of reading transmitted between an enthusiastic teacher and waiting children, but listening skills are

strengthened, comprehension is improved, and children are encouraged to develop their imagination.

According to Fuhler (1988), Huck (1987), and Trelease (1989) (cited in Tunnell and Jacobs, 1989), hearing a variety of stories read well, students are better able to build their own sense of story, to improve linguistic development, and eventually foster enthusiasm and a growing love of reading on their own.

Smith (1992) observed that the simple act of reading to children serves a multiplicity of vital purposes. It puts children in the company of people who read, shows them what can be done with reading, sparks their interest in the consequences of reading, informs them about the nature of stories, and most importantly, puts them in the company of authors.

Cullinan (1989) stated that in the whole language method, reading aloud to children is probably the most important thing one can do, especially in grades K-3. This allows children to hear printed words and reinforces their courage to read. Through the sharing of stories our literacy heritage is preserved, and children are shown that literature is at the heart of their reading program.

* Sustained silent reading. (SSR). SSR is the time provided for students and teachers to read materials of their own choosing without interruption. Allington (1977) suggested that the more words that pass in front of the eyes, the better the reader becomes. The time children spend in independent reading is associated with gains in reading achievement. Opportunity to reread favorites, reread books on audio tape, or read something new is the best way to give children the practice they need to apply their newly learned skills.

* Teacher modeling. Another important element is that of teacher modeling. One of Holdaway's (1982) three basic requirements of the Shared Book Experience was that teachers need to present new books with wholehearted enjoyment.

According to the same principle, teachers themselves should read during sustained silent reading (McCracken and McCracken, 1978). A prerequisite for this sort of modeling is a teacher who values reading in his/her personal life and also knows and love the children's books that will be read by the students.

* Emphasis on changing attitudes. An affective

approach to reading instruction is also a recurring element of a literature-based program. Tunnell's (1986) study showed a marked improvement of students attitudes, and researchers concurred with Larrick (1987) that best of all children loved to read.

* Self selection of reading material. Positive attitudes toward reading seem to be achieved by allowing children to select their own reading material. Cullinan (1989) noted that the two most important factors in helping children become avid readers are time for reading and allowing them to choose or select what they read.

Chapter III

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

In conclusion, a literature-based reading program requires that children have access to quantities of good books. A literary environment is one that has invitations to read all over the place.

The whole language instructional framework of the literature-based reading programs integrates learning to read with real reading. Its objective is to produce learners who not only can read but who also choose to read for pleasure and self satisfaction.

Literature-based reading programs hold much promise for stimulating readers of the future. Early experiences with the richness and variety of real reading materials seems to give children reason to read, teaching them not only how to read, but what to read. The affectivity of literature-based/whole language programs gives meaning and pleasure to the process of reading.

A literature-based reading strategy requires a teacher with vigor, ingenuity, and insight, one who can accept many kinds of reading interests and tastes. It demands a teacher who reads, one who believes in

reading, one who keeps in touch with libraries and one who does not use deadening teaching techniques.

There must be ample books of literary merit to tempt children to read on their own. A large stock of books ensures that the teacher can capitalize upon students enthusiasm by guiding them to literature that may satisfy their purpose of reading.

The success of literature-based reading programs is well documented in the research and literature. It is realistic to conclude that they serve as a viable approach to teaching reading at the elementary level.

Recommendations

As a result of this study, that is, comparing literature-based reading programs with basal reading approaches and identifying the elements of successful whole language, integrated classrooms, the following recommendations are made:

1. Whole Language/literature-based reading instructions should be introduced at the earliest grades. Any delay in introducing this approach does students a disservice.
2. School personnel should work closely with parents, because the home has a great

influence upon children's reading interest and development.

3. Librarians, teachers, and parents need to cooperate in carrying out new and exciting literature-based programs in their schools.
4. Teachers should provide an environment in which students view themselves as good readers who can enjoy and profit from various kinds of materials.
5. Additional research should be conducted on the process of implementing a literature-based reading program.
6. Experimental design studies should be conducted to determine if students taught using a literature-based reading program achieve more than those taught in a traditional reading program.
7. Longitudinal design studies should be conducted to determine the long range effect of a literature-based reading program on academic achievement.
8. Inservice programs should be conducted on literature-based reading instruction for

parents, teachers, and administrators.

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